



Universities Academic Staff Union - UoN Chapter
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ALL CORRESPONDENCES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY

PRESS RELEASE

Good morning, ladies & gentlemen of the Fourth Estate.

Lately, the University of Nairobi has been in the news, and NOT for reasons academic, but apparent squabbles at the helm of its leadership. These wrangles have been shameful and disruptive and keep bringing disrepute to the most prestigious Institution of Higher Learning in Kenya, Africa, and the World. This morning, we, as UASU – UoN leadership, have called you here to comment on this matter whilst being dispassionate to our mandate, which is solely the welfare of our members. We only stand by the truth, by justice, and above all, by the motto of the University: “Unitate et labore (Unity & Work).

UASU – UoN has been in office just **about THREE YEARS**. In that time, we have had **THREE University Councils, TWO University Chancellors and ONE Vice-Chancellor**. Whereas the University Chancellor & Vice Chancellor have enjoyed tenures of office, the University Council has been subject to political appointment. The musical chairs at the University Council have led to the following:

1. Litigation over the powers of the Cabinet Secretary in reconstituting University Councils – In a ruling by Justice Ngaah on 16th March 2024, the good Judge agreed with UASU that the Cabinet Secretary, MoE, did NOT have powers to reconstitute any University Council once appointed and gazetted. The Judge did NOT, however, rule to align with his observations, citing unknown repercussions the University would face. This has rendered the current University Council led by Prof Amukowa Anangwe “illegally constituted but in service.” This matter is currently undergoing appeal; hence, we cannot comment further.
2. Internal CBA 2017/2021 – The University Council is central in any negotiations of CBAs. This is why the stammering absence of the Council at UoN has led to an inordinate delay in negotiating and concluding the Internal CBA, which was last negotiated over a **DECADE AGO!** The appointment of Prof Amukowa’s team gave hope that UASU could finally conclude these negotiations. On 9th January 2024, UASU was invited to launch these negotiations. However, in a strange twist, the launch was called off **ONE DAY** later!! In a directive on 11th January 2024, the University Council Chair suspended the negotiations without providing an alternative date. UASU has written protest letters to the Cabinet Secretary over this matter, which remains in limbo. However, in a surprise directive to the Vice-Chancellor on 26th March 2024, the Council Chair approved the negotiation of the Internal CBA but exclusively with our sister Unions (KUSU & KUDHEHIA). Apparently, in the “wisdom” of the Council Chair, UASU is undeserving of any CBA negotiations **OVER TEN YEARS SINCE IT WAS LAST REVIEWED**. In the history of the University, such a split in the treatment of staff is unheard of. Shame!

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3. Internal Promotions – It is a labour right for employees deserving of promotion to be given the earliest possible opportunity to compete for such a promotion. The University of Nairobi has its traditions and norms for conducting promotions as guided in its Human Resources manual. Granted, this system has worked for many years despite its challenges. In a Senate meeting on 15th May 2024, the Chair of Senate (VC), responding to a question about the suspension of Internal Promotions, disclosed to Senate having received bizarre direction from the Chair of Council of an **INDEFINITE SUSPENSION of ALL** internal promotions. The ludicrous reason given was that the Council Chair had decided to institute a “new concept” of promotions. Members of staff who had been scheduled for promotion interviews since January 2024 were informed that their interviews had been **CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**. It is now **FOUR** months later, and there is no word from the University Council. Let the public know we have a system that works and has been working, and our members don’t need to be put on an indefinite waiting period, which is already outlaying them in pension and opportunity costs.

Whereas UASU does NOT wish to escalate the already ongoing internecine wrangles, it is our right as a social partner at the University that we call to order ALL wrangling parties. It is NOT in the interest of our members that incessant squabbles dominate national headlines. These disputes call to question some fundamental questions:

Where is the voice of the Ministry of Education? Where is the President, Vice President, Speakers of both National Parliaments, and the many legislators in Government who are all Alumni of the University? The University of Nairobi is a strategic National Institution, and it behooves those at the helm to take charge.

UASU demands an immediate moratorium on any escalation of hostilities. We demand that our members’ welfare be put at the forefront of decisions at the University, i.e., the negotiation and conclusion of the belated internal CBA 2017/21 and the resumption of internal promotion interviews. We demand the respect of the rule of law, the sanctity of our long-nurtured traditions and ethos of the University, and the realization that we are working not just for Kenya but for the future of our beloved country. Our University deserves peace in realizing its mandate as a research and teaching institution. **WE DON’T NEED MORE DRAMA.**

Sincerely,

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